

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of sterilizing a surface using a mobile, ~~enclosed flamer comprising a hood, said hood being open at an inlet, and at least one burner, and skids for maintaining a height above said surface, said method comprising:~~

- (a) ~~transporting the flamer to location;~~
- (b) ~~setting operatively, and at least partially, supporting the flamer on the skids surface; and~~
- (c) ~~setting a flame to the at least one burner such that the flame is contained within the hood at a same time that said hood is not sealed by virtue of the open inlet; and~~
- (d) ~~sterilizing the surface on which the flamer is operatively supported.~~

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the flamer is moved about the surface while sterilizing.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the flamer additionally comprises wheels and is drawn by a vehicle.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein a burner angle relative to the hood is ~~adjustable~~ adjusted during sterilization.

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sterilizing a surface, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a hood for containing a flame;
- (b) at least one burner situated under the hood, said burner oriented so a flame direction is substantially horizontal; ~~and~~
- (c) a hitch for attaching said flamer to a tractor; and
- (d) skids operatively affixed to the hood and operatively engaged to the surface to be sterilized.

6. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said hood comprises an external frame and a skin.

7. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the hitch is a three-point hitch for attaching said flamer to a tractor.

8. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5 wherein the hitch is a quick coupler for attaching said flamer to a tractor.

9. (Original) The apparatus of claim 5, additionally comprising wheels for bearing a weight of the flamer, wherein the hitch is a tongue for attaching said flamer to a tractor.

10. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5 additionally comprising a fuel tank ~~operably~~ operatively mounted on the hood, said fuel tank containing fuel for the burner.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5 additionally comprising a fuel tank ~~operably~~ operatively mounted on a tractor.

12. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5 additionally comprising a pivot for adjusting an angle of the at least one burner, said angle being measured relative to the hood.

13. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 5 ~~additionally comprising ground engaging wherein the~~ skids supporting at least some of a weight of the flamer when in operation and ~~engaging engage the ground surface to be sterilized at all times during operation of the flamer.~~

14. (Original) The apparatus of claim 13 wherein the skids are adjustable as to height.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~5-6~~ additionally comprising insulation over the skin on a side of the skin opposite the at least one burner.

16. (Original) The apparatus of claim 10 additionally comprising a heat shield disposed between the hood and the fuel tank.

17. (Currently Amended) A method of sterilizing poultry litter, the method comprising the steps of:

- (a) holding poultry in confinement such that litter accumulates to form a surface;
- (b) transporting a flamer to the litter surface;
- ~~(c) setting the flamer on skids on the surface;~~
- ~~(d) setting a flame to the burner such that the flame is contained within a hood; and~~
- ~~(e) heating the poultry litter sufficiently to kill microbes and bacteria; and~~
- ~~(f) moving the flamer over the surface while heating the poultry litter.~~

18. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for sterilizing a surface, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a hood for containing a flame;
- (b) an open inlet of the hood comprising a hood opening such that the hood is not sealed to the surface;
- ~~(c)~~ a plurality of burners situated under the hood; and
- ~~(d)~~ a hitch for attaching said flamer to a tractor.

19. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 18 wherein the apparatus has a forward direction corresponding to a towing vehicle forward direction, the apparatus additionally comprising:

- (a) rake teeth disposed forward of the plurality of burners and under the hood; and
- (b) a barrier disposed between the rake teeth and the plurality of burners and under the hood.

20. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the flamer additionally comprises an open outlet, the method additionally comprising not sealing the hood by virtue of the open outlet.

21. (New) An apparatus for sterilizing a surface, said apparatus comprising:

- (a) a hood surrounding the surface to be sterilized;
- (b) a plurality of burners situated within the hood, each of said plurality of burners oriented so a flame direction is substantially horizontal; and
- (c) a hitch for attaching said flamer to a tractor.